

Editorial

Hockey Night and Other Canadian Myths

It is the general thesis of the articles in this issue that, when looked at closely, “cultural citizenship” in most countries reveals itself to be a patchwork of myths and narratives variously articulated. This was as true for Roland Barthes’ path-breaking *Mythologies*, which looks at modern French popular culture 60 years ago, as it is today. In a strikingly similar vein, **Ryan J. Phillips** (Ryerson University) takes on one of the major sources of Canadian mythologies, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s (CBC’s) Hockey Night in Canada (HNIC), from a feminist political economy perspective.

Since the 1930s, the CBC’s weekly radio hockey broadcast has been dependent on major corporate advertising. Whatever HNIC’s role in the gendered culture of boys and men, its political economy has been implicated in the major fractures of the Canadian economy, notably those of the state versus the private sector. And key here is the role played by advertising in the creation of the “audience commodity” as Dallas Smyth termed it in a seminal late-1970s article. In the same way that the audience commodity, which is then sold and resold by advertisers, is not monolithic but the product of viewer labour, that same audience, while heavily male-dominated (in caricatures of the likes of Don Cherry), is not only male dominated. Recalling the path-breaking role of CBC announcer Helen Hutchison in the 1970s, Phillips also takes a serious look at the gender economy surrounding hockey in Canada since the late 1800s.

J. Richard Pattinson, University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), tackles the thorny relationship between “Popular Music and the Canadian Identity.” While the literature seems to agree on the validity of music as an identity marker, much of the contention vacillates between what part of the national heritage resides in music versus the idea that the “foreign” outperforms “the domestic,” though as he notes at some point the foreign fuses into the domestic. The Canadian case, however, is still heavily imprinted by absences of detailed research, perhaps because of the heavy influence of the CRTC and the Broadcasting Act since the 1960s in attempting to define what counts as “Canadian.” Similar to Canadian cinema and its debates, the pertinent model here seems also to be the case of Australian music’s struggle for a foothold on the airwaves. Pattinson’s timely article offers a research model of audience response’s to Canadian music, as well as useful notes on a selection of Canadian singers and bands.

William Sanger and **Thierry Warin**, both from HEC (University of Montréal), look at the changing rules of the political game in Québec as a result of social media in “The Public’s Perception of Political Parties During the 2014 Québec on Twitter.” Political polling is horribly expensive; tracking Twitter messages is not. If there were a reliable way to “read” the political in Twitter messages, not only are the financial gains

considerable, there are also significant impacts on both campaign strategy and political messaging. In the 2014 election lead-up, the incumbent Parti Québécois government thought calling out the electorate would be low-risk. Instead, the incoming Liberals resoundingly trounced it. Sanger and Warin tracked 670,000 tweets analyzed according to specific hashtags, party leaders, 31 ideational themes, and timelines. Perhaps the main finding of this important article is that incumbency, which can seem to be an advantage at the beginning of a campaign, can turn into a major liability. And secondly that opposition parties should not overly dwell on the incumbent's agenda.

Still very much on point, **Yanick Farmer, Mehliia Bissière, and Amina Benkirane** (Université du Québec à Montréal) examine social conformity as it plays out online in "Impacts of Authority and Unanimity on Social Conformity in Online Chats about Climate Change." The key idea here is to look at two variables of persuasive communication, namely authority and unanimity, to evaluate whether social conformity was maintained in online communication among strangers. The study had a small sample ($N = 26$), but it was supported by extensive interviews. It did find that the tendency to conformity was maintained, if not to the same degree as in face-to-face communication. Given, however, the increasingly widespread use of technological mediation for ordinary communication, this is cold comfort.

In "The Power of Myths and Story-Telling in Nation-Building: The Campaign for the Independence of Catalonia from Spain (2012–2015)," **César García** (Central Washington University) examines the fundamental persuasive mechanisms at play in nation-building. While his analysis was written before the most recent crisis in which Madrid arrested the Puigdemont regional government, García's account stresses the importance of the creation of a "symbolic-mythical" complex as a condition *sine qua non* for good nation-building storytelling. The role of the storyteller would be to adapt origin myths to political, economic, and social changes by building a new mythical story that maintains continuity with tradition. The final section of the article uses Ronald Tobias' (1993) 20 master plots to analyze the successful use of storytelling by the leaders of Catalan nationalism. It presents the use of four master plots that work separately, reinforce each other, and sustain the main narrative, all to justify the creation of a Catalan state.

Stephanie Patrick (University of Ottawa) analyzes some of the reasons for the success of the CBC comedy hit *Schitt's Creek* in "Without A Paddle: *Schitt's Creek*, CBC, and the Return to Community and Family in Uncertain Times." Carrying out both a textual analysis of the program and a cultural analysis of its production, Patrick shows the parallels between precarious Canadian identity and precarious economic conditions in the neoliberal era. *Schitt's Creek* builds on other "retreatist" texts that portray small community life and family as sites of stability in times of uncertainty. However, it de-localizes this community from the Canadian context, using stars and the CBC platform to signify place, rather than content. These alternative signifiers of "Canadianness" along with a marked shift in tone potentially account for the show's broad appeal.

In "Spiral & Vortex: Robert Smithson and the Cinematic Spaces of Wyndham Lewis and Marshall McLuhan," **Adam Lauder** (York University) resituates the American trans-

disciplinary artist as a participant in the shared spatial discourse of Wyndham Lewis, a Canadian-born precursor of the Toronto School of Communication and his protégé, Marshall McLuhan. Although Smithson's references to Lewis and McLuhan have been noted in passing by previous studies, this article advances the first systematic analysis of the post-minimalist artist's relationship to figures associated with the Toronto School. It thereby advances the project of redefining the Toronto School of Communication itself as a global "discourse network" defined by shared concepts and tools, as well as a community of speakers organized around persistent questions related to the co-shaping of bodies, media, and perception. The networked form of this discursive space disrupts linear chronologies of "influence": what emerges from its partial retracing here is, rather, a winding map of intergenerational dialogue marked by striking redundancies as well as significant points of tension and disagreement.

Mary Jane Kwok Choon (UQAM) in "Revisiting the Privacy Paradox on Social Media: An Analysis of Privacy Practices Associated to Facebook and Twitter," undertakes ethnographic research to examine twenty young adults' privacy practices and their relationship to privacy when they are using social network sites (SNSs), such as Facebook and Twitter. Self-exposure is related to forms of visibility as recognition. Users developed privacy protection strategies on both sites. The privacy paradox is shaped by various factors such as a limited knowledge of institutional surveillance practices, the low visibility of these practices in context, a perception of control over the publication of information, and thin social trust. Users trust SNSs to a certain extent and consider that notice and consent are problematic. These findings provide empirical support for the application of the contextual integrity approach on social media and the development of a critical media education even at an adult age.

References

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